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REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR

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SUBJECT Reaction to MALENKOV's
Speech of 8 August 1953

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the main characteristics
or the speech and its significance lie in the following:

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- a. Whereas the first speech given by MALENKOV after STALIN's death was delivered in his capacity as one of STALIN's successors, the speech of 8 August was given by him as the successor to STALIN. MALENKOV's tone, his way of speaking to the Supreme Soviet, made it quite clear that, at least for some time to come, the Communist Party of the USSR and the Soviet government is Georgiy Maksimilianovich MALENKOV.

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- b. Except for a few parts of MALENKOV's speech directed to the West, the speech was primarily meant for USSR internal consumption.
- c. The speech outlined for the first time the political and economic platform established after STALIN's death. Two significant moves designed to satisfy broad masses of the USSR population stood out clearly:
- (1) To improve the position of collective farmers and to raise their standard of living, which until now has been the main cause of the dissatisfaction of 120,000,000 rural inhabitants of the USSR.
 - (2) To expand considerably light industry, at the expense of heavy industry, and increase production of consumer goods aimed at satisfying the needs of the Soviet working masses. Scarcity and poor quality of Soviet consumer goods was long one of the main criticisms leveled against the Soviet Government. Very significant was MALENKOV's definite statement that the USSR could, and would, by 1955 increase production of consumer goods by 78% over the 1951 output.
2. That part of MALENKOV's speech concerned with the improvement of living conditions in the USSR contained a new note: until the present time the national wealth of the USSR has been used for the expansion of heavy industry at the expense of the living standard of the population; from now on the Party and government, according to MALENKOV, will concentrate their attention on satisfying the people's needs. In a mild way MALENKOV admitted that until now, for certain reasons, the Soviet people have been deprived of many material benefits. From now on, this will not be the case, MALENKOV promises; the Party and government, i.e. MALENKOV himself, will take care of this. The far-reaching effects of such a move should be clear to everybody familiar with economic conditions in the USSR and the capabilities of its highly centralized administration.
3. [REDACTED] among other things, the speech was an official answer to the Western psychological warfare campaign against the Soviet Government, a campaign which was considerably intensified following STALIN's death. MALENKOV even admitted that some of the West's criticism of economic conditions in the USSR was justified.
4. [REDACTED] MALENKOV's statement that the USSR has the hydrogen bomb was the truth. Such statements place an enormous responsibility upon a government. No government, not even the Soviet one (deceptive as it may be), would dare deliberately to make a false statement of such magnitude. What would be the position of this government if in a few months it needed to use the hydrogen bomb and did not have it? Then again, it is to be assumed that a large number of Soviet scientists have been working on such bombs and that they well know whether it has been produced or not. If MALENKOV's statement were a lie nobody, not even the Soviet police system, could prevent these scientists from denying MALENKOV's statement. They could be prevented from publishing such a denial; but they would certainly talk, and the truth would come out. Not everybody in the USSR is an opportunist and a "yes man". There are many who honestly believe in what they are doing and who would not be afraid to stand up and tell the truth regardless of the consequences.

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If this is true for the average citizen, it would be true even more for people engaged in scientific work and remote from any political entanglements. It is preposterous to assume that MALENKOV, on such an issue of world-wide interest, would risk being called a "dirty liar" not only by the USSR's distinguished scientists but eventually by the 200,000,000 people he leads. If we always assume Soviet leaders are liars, we will be in danger of making wide misinterpretations of many happenings within the USSR.

- a. Why should the fact that the USSR has developed a hydrogen bomb come as a surprise to the West? It has been proven that much top secret information concerning the research and production of the atomic bomb fell into Soviet hands. How can we be sure that this was not repeated in the case of the hydrogen bomb? What do we know of the abilities of Soviet scientists charged with the realization of projects of national importance and supported in this task by the unlimited financial means and resources of totalitarian government? We should not forget that an ultimate centralization of power and resources is a basic characteristic of the Soviet government. If a high priority is assigned to a project, the government of the USSR is in the position to support its realization with policies which would be anathema to the West.

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b.

The Soviet government has always been very sensitive to any aspersions cast on its position as the protector of working masses throughout the world; and unless forced, it will not use methods of warfare which would brand it as the exterminator of masses of civilians. This was the main reason why the USSR in World War II did not fight to build up a strategic air force, but left the task of the aerial destruction of enemy countries to its British and US allies. After World War II this gave the Soviet Union an excellent propaganda weapon against the West.

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5.

Coexistence is possible, MALENKOV believes, as far as the Soviet Union is concerned. However, it is a Soviet axiom that the capitalist West, by its very nature, is doomed to destruction. Whether the highest Soviet rulers sincerely believe this is difficult to say. Whether they do or do not is not so important. The point is that they force their followers to believe in the axiom and are quite successful in this task. That is all that counts. The Soviet government believes that it would not pay to speed up the "inevitable destruction of the capitalist West" by means of a war. They think it is quite sufficient to seize every opportunity of weakening capitalist countries from the inside. This will be the continuing aim of the Soviet government under MALENKOV. That is why

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the MALENKOV statement that, "...Soviet foreign policy would seek peace and cooperation among nations..." should be understood more to mean cooperation with the respective peoples than with their governments.

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7. Whatever the development of events in Eastern Germany, we should not expect the USSR to leave the area and pull out its troops. Eastern Germany, as well as North Korea, are too important as strategic areas in case of war for the USSR ever to abandon them (unless the Soviet government should grow certain that there will not be a war for a long time to come). Right now, bona fide withdrawal from these areas is quite out of the question. because of the state of mind of the Kremlin leaders. [redacted] unfortunately, the CP and the government of the USSR sincerely believe the West is preparing for an aggressive war against the USSR, and that they will spare no effort to put over this idea to the people. And when, in his speech, MALENKOV says that the "...German problem can be solved", he does not fail to say "...the Soviet government is supporting and will continue to support the government of the German Democratic Republic."
8. Very significant is the part of MALENKOV's speech devoted to the intention of the USSR to maintain good relations with Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkey, as well as with Israel, Finland, France, and Egypt.

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